

Woodbury Women Make County Rural Library Law Work For Them

THINGS just don't happen, somebody makes them happen. This was the attitude adopted a few years back by a determined group of Woodbury County folks as they started a successful campaign to get a county rural library in operation.

"Operation Library" has come a long way since the voters approved the plan in November of 1950. In 1952, for example, 45,283 volumes circulated among the rural residents of Woodbury County. All told, the Woodbury County

rural library owns more than 10,000 books.

Bookmobile Helps

Aiding and abetting the circulation of books is a bookmobile, which makes the rounds of the county once every 30 days, stopping at all the rural schools in the county. Since the bookmobile was delivered in February, 1951, it has traveled over 13,000 miles. In addition to the bookmobile and the library building at Moville, there is a branch library at Pierson and

WOI Program

The April broadcast over station WOI, Ames, by the Iowa Farm Bureau Women's Committee, will be handled by Mrs. Glynn Warren, Atlantic, who will discuss current legislation that affects farm people. That's at 3:45 p.m., Tuesday, April 7. Mrs. Warren is Ninth District member of state Farm Bureau Women's Committee.

"deposits" at Bronson, Cushing, Salix, Climbing Hill, Smithland, and Sergeant Bluff.

The steps through which the rural library evolved, as explained by Louis A. Peterson, one of the nine members on the county public library board of directors, is in brief:

"We got a petition signed by five per cent of the persons who voted at the last election. Then we got the library proposal on the ballot at the next election (November, 1950). The Farm Bureau women of the county promoted the issue in connection with their regular Get-Out-The-Vote campaign," Peterson points out.

Library Board

The library proposal carried by a big majority. The next step was the appointment of the nine-member board by the county board of supervisors. First job for the new library board was the drawing up of the first budget. The library board agreed on a first year budget of \$27,000, which was approved by the supervisors.

"Then we selected our site at Moville and started construction on the library building," Peterson continues. "We also ordered the bookmobile about this time." Then the board hired a librarian (Miss Agnes Buskirk, who's still in that job). Within a year from the date the proposal was approved by the voters, the Woodbury County Rural Library was open for "business." In addition to Miss Buskirk, salaried employees include



Mrs. Ray Cunningham, Woodbury Women's Chairman, shows a book to Lora Lee Swanson while Librarian Agnes J. Buskirk helps Clifford Monk pick out a book.

Assistant Librarian Orpha German and bookmobile driver Art Ralston.

Mrs. Ray Cunningham, Woodbury County Farm Bureau Women's Committee Chairman, points out that the tax-supported county rural library can be used by townspeople only "if they don't have a tax-supported public library in their town."

Women's Program

Miss Leone Bernard, county Farm Bureau Women's Library Chairman, in the library program goals, asks that at least five minutes of each township meeting be given to book comments. The goals also specify that recognition be given to the township women's group showing the most improvement in the reading habits of that group.

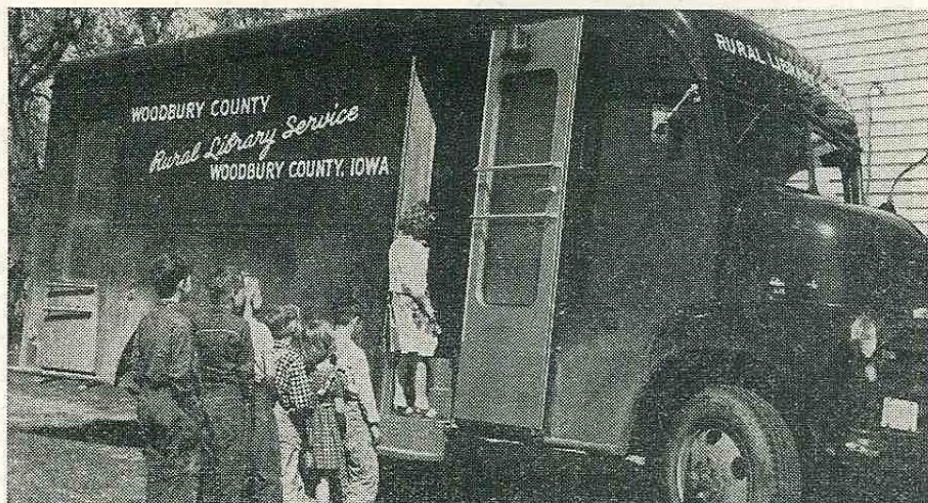
Incidentally, the Farm Bureau women's reading champion for the last program year was Mrs. W. D. Martens. She read and reported on 109 books last year. But what is even more important than her accomplishment was the results of her campaign to interest her husband in reading. "He thought it was silly at first," Mrs. Martens explains, "but now he reads as much as I do."

The 1952 report on the library phase of the Woodbury County Farm Bureau women's program shows that 7,864 books were read by Farm Bureau families. Of this number, 5,027 were read by children, 2,837 by adults.

Since the proof of the pudding is in the eating, indications are that the rural library in Woodbury County is a great success, judging from the public acceptance afforded the plan. All of which is a fitting tribute to the untiring efforts of the group of people who initiated and saw the plan through.



Woodbury County folks took time out last month to take a look at their new county public rural library. These four, who helped get the library going, include, from left to right: Miss Esther Klingebiel, county Home Economist; Louis A. Peterson, member of the county library board; Mrs. Ray Cunningham, chairman of the Farm Bureau women's committee, and Mrs. W. D. Martens.



As a result of the Woodbury County library law, rural schools are now served by mobile libraries. The bookmobile above also distributes reading material to several small communities in the county, where "depots" are set up for the use of families who would otherwise be too far from a city library for convenience. This photo was made by the Sioux City Journal.

Farm Bureau is opposing a legislative proposal that would allow a city to withdraw from a county library district by filing a notice of intention. We support an amendment to the proposal which would require a majority vote of the county library board before such withdrawal could take place.

Inman Says Libraries Were First Goal of Reading Program

COMMENTING on the Woodbury achievement, Mrs. C. C. Inman, Bancroft, IFBF Women's Committee Chairman, said that "establishing of rural libraries was the original and primary objective behind the women's

financing of rural library districts. The Woodbury women have shown us how to get the job done. The law is easy to apply. I hope many more counties not now properly serviced by city libraries

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